



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
San Antonio, Texas

Draft Rehabilitate the Cultural Landscape and Enhance Visitor Services San José Drive Area Environmental Assessment

May 2015



Huisache Bowl, Mission San Jose



National Park Service
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San José Drive

Rehabilitate the Cultural Landscape and Enhance Visitor Services

Environmental Assessment

SUMMARY

The San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (SAAN) was established by Public Law, 92 Stat. 3635, P.L. 95-629, approved November 10, 1978. The park, which is located on alternate sides of the San Antonio River, preserves the 18th century Spanish missions of San Antonio. The missions are historically and architecturally significant remnants of the Spanish quest for lands and Christian converts in the New World.

The current cultural landscape north of the Mission San José compound and south of San Jose Drive has been greatly modified over time diminishing the integrity of the Mission San Jose cultural landscape. Mission San José exhibits evidence of deterioration. The area surrounding the mission also continues to develop with initiatives such as the San Antonio River Improvement Project and the Mission Library. The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate a portion of the cultural landscape of the mission, increasing the cultural integrity of the setting, by removing fill and relocating a parking lot. A second purpose is to enhance/improve the visitor experience with new trails and a restroom. This project should also fit in with local development initiatives, which is complementary to the park's purpose.

Two action alternatives, plus the no-action alternative, were identified based on program goals and objectives, internal and external scoping, guidance from existing park plans, and policy guidance from the National Park Service.

Public comments from the scoping period centered on a concern related to the proposed open space gathering area that would be created a result of the landscape rehabilitation, specifically the size of the area and the type of the events that would be held within the area. Further concerns were also raised regarding the proposed addition of a new maintenance/storage/restroom building within the Mission San José cultural landscape. This led to a revised Alternative 2 which is described below along with the other alternatives considered.

No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications to the current landscape and park infrastructure would be made. Should the no-action alternative be selected, the cultural landscape along San Jose Drive would not be rehabilitated and visitor services would not be enhanced.

Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Alternative 1 includes restoring the cultural landscape by combining the Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl.” The open space would be graded to create an approximately 39,000 square foot grassed “bowl” or amphitheater, removing the existing concrete performance pad. The area adjacent to Harris House would also serve as an extended outdoor education area, with graded grassed terraces. The Harris House parking lot would be reconfigured and the current trail system would be extended. A pedestrian trail would be created from the existing gravel overflow parking lot, following the general alignment of San José Drive and connecting to Roosevelt Avenue. This segment of trail would create a connection to the existing Graham Trail. Additional pedestrian trails would be created surrounding the improved parking lot. The pedestrian trails around the Grist Mill area would also be reconfigured in order to promote

access to an existing secondary smaller meeting area of approximately 400 square feet. The existing maintenance/storage area would also be reconfigured in order to create a new maintenance/storage/restroom facility.

Alternative 2 – Preferred Action

Alternative 2 includes most of the elements discussed as Alternative 1 with a few important differences. The alternative would include closing and removing a portion of San José Drive. San José Drive would be closed between East Pyron and Roosevelt Avenues. Access to the monastery would be maintained by retaining a small portion of San José Drive. The removal of the road would allow for the further expansion and restoration of the cultural landscape beyond just combining the Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl.” The area east of and adjacent to the Harris House would be reconfigured with little landscaping, and there would be no graded and improved 39,000 square foot event area further east. The existing unimproved open space would remain largely as is and could be used for smaller and less numerous events. Also, the parking lot adjacent to the Harris House would be more extensively reconfigured, enlarged in order to accommodate a bus turn-around, and placed closer to Roosevelt Avenue. Pedestrian trail enhancements would be very similar to Alternative 1. Pedestrian trails around the Grist Mill would still be reworked, promoting access to the secondary open meeting area. Lastly, under Alternative 2 the existing maintenance storage area would remain the same, and a new adaptive use restroom would be created near the Granary instead.

The primary impacts from the proposed project are anticipated to be mostly beneficial. The cultural landscape, historic district, and visitor experience would all be improved by the removal or relocation of inappropriate features and by having more events outside of the Mission San Jose compound. The addition of new trails, an improved parking lot, and a new restroom would enhance visitor services. However, park operations are expected to slightly increase due to a need for increased ranger presence, especially law enforcement.

Public Comment

If you wish to comment on the environmental assessment, you may post comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/> or mail comments to: Greg Mitchell, 2202 Roosevelt Avenue, San Antonio, Texas 78210-4919.

This environmental assessment is available for public review for 30 days. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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PURPOSE AND NEED

Introduction

The San Antonio Missions Historical Park (SAAN) is considering various park improvements to the area north of Mission San José. These park improvements would rehabilitate the cultural landscape in this area, enhance visitor services and improve the visitor experience, and also fit in with local development initiatives that are complementary to the parks purpose. The purpose of this environmental assessment (EA) is to examine the environmental impacts associated with the proposed park improvements. This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] §1508.9), and the National Park Service (NPS) Director's Order (DO)-12 (*Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making*).

Background

SAAN was established by Public Law, 92 Stat. 3635, P.L. 95-629, approved November 10, 1978. The park is located on alternate sides of the San Antonio River as it flows through the southern half of San Antonio. The 18th century Spanish missions of San Antonio are historically and architecturally significant remnants of the Spanish quest for lands and Christian converts in the New World. Preserved inside the park's boundaries is the largest concentration of Spanish colonial resources in the United States (U.S). SAAN consists of Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan, and Mission Espada (NPS 1982). **Figure 1** shows the park boundaries and the location of the proposed park improvements relative to the park boundaries.

As stated in the park's General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan (GMP/DCP), the parks purpose is to:

...provide for the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the Spanish Missions of San Antonio, Texas, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations of Americans, there is hereby established the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park...consisting of Concepción, San José, San Juan, and Espada Missions, together with areas and features historically associated therewith.

Mission San José is the oldest and largest of the four missions included in the park. It was also the most successful according to the accounts of various 18th century travelers. In 1768 the Indian population at the mission reached its peak. Over 350 Indians elected their own officers, administered their own judicial system, and cared for a farm stretching two miles along the San Antonio River as well as a ranch that supported several thousand cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals. At that time the compound contained living quarters for the Indians, shops for weaving, tailoring, woodworking, and blacksmithing; lime and brick kilns, and a granary. The convento was used as a chapel since the old adobe church had been torn down to make way for a new stone church. Visitors to the mission also noted the Indians' ability to speak, read, and write Spanish, the quality of the mission choir, and the widespread use of musical instruments (NPS 1981).

After secularization the mission suffered neglect. The buildings fell into ruins, and the mission lands were gradually encroached upon by urban development. Surrounding agricultural lands



Figure 1 – Project Location Map

experienced development pressure from the City of San Antonio as low density development occurred around the missions and on lands used as labors and ranchos (NPS 1981). An extensive restoration and reconstruction project was undertaken in the 1930s. Public works programs supported mission projects throughout the 1930s, with the Civil Works Administration (CWA), Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and other organizations contributing federal funds to the preservation effort (NPS 1995).

The Mission San José site therefore has two periods of significance - 1721-1794 (the colonial period) and 1911-1941 (the historic preservation and re-creation period). Both periods contribute to the historical significance of the site (NPS 1995).

Today visitors to San José are able to see a nearly complete mission compound, but due to considerable residential, commercial and industrial development, the labores, acequia system, and ranch lands have vanished (NPS 1981). With the exception of the convento, sacristy, and parts of the church walls, the San José compound as seen today is largely an extensive reconstruction. The church and surrounds are presently used for religious services as well as for baptisms, funerals, weddings, receptions, annual festivals, and other gatherings. The church with its single bell tower and highly ornamented façade dominates the compound. The area surrounding the mission is characterized by fields and grassy lawns dotted with canopy trees, such as mesquite (NPS 1981).

The reconstruction effort itself is now a part of the mission's evolving history. Although San José presents a significant cultural landscape that contributes generally to an understanding of the role of the mission in Spanish colonial settlement in the American Southwest and, more specifically, in the San Antonio vicinity, development that postdates the period of significance of the mission has resulted in diminished integrity of setting for Mission San José. This project would rehabilitate a portion of the cultural landscape and help restore some of the lost integrity.

In addition, the area surrounding the Mission San Jose and the park in general is currently undergoing a number of development initiatives such as the San Antonio River Improvement Project (SARIP), the Missions Trails Project, and the construction of the Mission Library. Enhancing visitor services at Mission San Jose would be both complementary to the SAAN themes and objectives and the development initiatives.

Purpose and Need

The current cultural landscape north of the Mission San José compound has been greatly modified over time diminishing the integrity of the cultural setting of the mission. Mission San José also exhibits evidence of deterioration. The area surrounding the mission also continues to develop with initiatives such as the SARIP and the Mission Library. The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate the cultural landscape north of the mission, increasing the cultural integrity of the setting, and enhancing the visitor experience, including fitting in with local development initiatives, which are complementary to the park's purpose.

The project is needed in order to accomplish the objectives discussed below:

Objective 1: *Address the greatly modified cultural landscape north of the Mission San José compound through removal of selected features and rehabilitation of a specific area.*

Objective 2: *Reduce the risk of damage to the park's historic resources and infrastructure by relocating some facilities and public events to the area north of the Mission San Jose compound.*

Objective 3: *Enhance the park visitor experience and develop the project in a manner that is consistent with local initiatives and the park's mission statement, while minimizing adverse effects to natural and cultural resources.*

Relationship to Other Plans and Policies

This project has been developed in a manner consistent with NPS legal mandates and *Management Policies 2006* (NPS 2006). The SAAN GMP/DCP also provides broad direction for the management of the park and identifies actions to improve the quality of both visitor and employee experience, as well as for the management and protection of historic values and natural resources. A cultural landscape analysis documented in the 1995 San José Cultural Landscape Report also provided recommendations for the preservation and management of the mission's historic resources. The proposed park improvements analyzed in this document were reviewed for conformance with the GMP/DCP and the Cultural Landscape Report.

General Management/Development Concept Plan Recommendations

In 1982, a GMP/DCP was developed for SAAN. Such planning documents are required for all national parks, and are developed early on in the park's existence. The GMP/DCP developed for this park was in response "to the establishing legislation's requirement that a 'final master plan' be submitted to Congress 'indicating (A) the facilities needed to accommodate the health, safety, and interpretive needs of the visiting public; (B) the location and estimated cost of all facilities; and (C) the projected need for any additional facilities within the park" (SAAN, 2000).

The GMP/DCP outlined initiatives that would support the interpretation of the site theme and provided recommendations for managing Mission San José resources and operations. These recommendations were presented in four phases as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – GMP/DCP Recommendations

Phase	Recommendation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrade utilities in historic structures facility - Staff office (adaptive use) - Rehabilitate north and south wall restrooms - Multi-purpose facility adaptive
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretive display area (adaptive use) - Rehabilitate walkways in compound - Interpretive media
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquire two acres of private land (by city) - Realign Napier Avenue (by city) - Relocate or remove utilities for future development - New park visitor center - New parking area - Interpretive media - Remove former parking area and road alignment - Remove intrusions on historic scene - Rehabilitate landscape and provide buffer screens - Remove south wall restrooms
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ever available remove the monastery facilities for adaptive use - Restore historic structures and landscape where feasible and appropriate - Shuttle bus shelter - Bicycle rental and repair facility is feasible

The proposed park improvements would address the following Phase 3 recommendations: new parking area, remove intrusions on historic scene, rehabilitate landscape and provide buffer screens. The proposed park improvements would address the following Phase 4 recommendation: Restore historic structures and landscape where feasible and appropriate.

Cultural Landscape Report

The Cultural Landscape Report described the significance of the Mission San José landscape and the general contribution that it makes to an understanding of the role of the mission in Spanish colonial settlement. The report developed cultural landscape preservation strategies for Mission San José that would not only address the park's above-ground landscape that represents the historic preservation and re-creation period (1911-1941) but that also protect significant archeological resources. The Cultural Landscape Report recommended a treatment approach of preservation of archeological resources and rehabilitation for the above-ground landscape. The report also recognized the sometimes conflicting goals of protecting the park's historic, cultural, and natural resources, while providing a comfortable and informative site for visitors. The proposed park improvements were found to be generally consistent with the recommendation of the Cultural Landscape Report. These aspects are discussed in more detail in the *Environmental Consequences* section of the EA.

Scoping

Scoping is a process to identify the resources that may be affected by a project proposal and to explore possible alternative ways of achieving the proposal while minimizing adverse impacts. SAAN conducted internal scoping with appropriate NPS staff, as described in more detail in the *Consultation and Coordination* section. The park also conducted external scoping with the public and interested and affected groups and agencies.

External scoping was initiated with the distribution of a scoping letter to inform the public of the proposed park improvements and to generate input on the preparation of this EA. The scoping letter was mailed to over 300 addresses which included federal, state, local agencies and local landowners. Scoping information was also posted on the park's website. The public scoping meeting was held on January 11, 2011. A total of 30 people attended the meeting, which included an open house, a formal presentation in which the preliminary project alternatives were described, and a question and answer session.

A public comment period commenced on January 11, 2011 and was open until January 27, 2011. In total, 12 letters and emails, 1 verbal comment and 1 PEPC comment were received during the meeting and scoping period.

Review and analysis of the comments indicated a general concern related to the proposed open space gathering area that would be created a result of the landscape rehabilitation. Specific concerns included the size of the area and the type of the events that would be held within the area. Further concerns were also raised regarding the proposed addition of a new maintenance/storage/restroom building within the Mission San José cultural landscape.

Impact Topics Retained For Further Analysis

Impact topics for this project have been identified on the basis of federal laws, regulations, and orders; NPS Management Policies 2006; and NPS knowledge of resources at SAAN. Impact topics that are carried forward for further analysis in this EA are listed below:

- Cultural landscapes
- Historic structures and districts

- Archeological resources.
- Visitor use and experience
- Park operations

Impact Topics Dismissed From Further Analysis

In this section, NPS takes a “hard look” at all potential impacts by considering the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action on the environment, along with connected and cumulative actions. Impacts are described in terms of context and duration. The context or extent of the impact is described as localized or widespread. The duration of impacts is described as short-term, ranging from days to three years in duration, or long-term, extending up to 20 years or longer. The intensity and type of impact is described as negligible, minor, moderate, or major, and as beneficial or adverse. The NPS equates “major” effects as “significant” effects. The identification of “major” effects would trigger the need for an EIS. Where the intensity of an impact could be described quantitatively, the numerical data is presented; however, most impact analyses are qualitative and use best professional judgment in making the assessment.

The NPS defines “measurable” impacts as moderate or greater effects. It equates “no measurable effects” as minor or less effects. “No measurable effect” is used by NPS in determining if a categorical exclusion applies or if impact topics may be dismissed from further evaluation in an EA or EIS. The use of “no measurable effects” in this EA pertains to whether NPS dismisses an impact topic from further detailed evaluation in the EA. The reason NPS uses “no measurable effects” to determine whether impact topics are dismissed from further evaluation is to concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail in accordance with CEQ regulations at 1500.1(b).

In this section of the EA, NPS provides a limited evaluation and explanation as to why some impact topics are not evaluated in more detail. Impact topics are dismissed from further evaluation in this EA if:

- they do not exist in the analysis area, or
- they would not be affected by the proposal, or the likelihood of impacts are not reasonably expected, or
- through the application of mitigation measures, there would be minor or less effects (i.e. no measurable effects) from the proposal, and there is little controversy on the subject or reasons to otherwise include the topic.

Due to there being no effect or no measurable effects, there would either be no contribution towards cumulative effects or the contribution would be low. For each issue or topic presented below, if the resource is found in the analysis area or the issue is applicable to the proposal, then a limited analysis of direct and indirect, and cumulative effects is presented.

Topography, Geology, and Soils

According to the NPS Management Policies 2006, NPS will preserve and protect geologic resources and features from adverse effects of human activity, while allowing natural processes to continue. These policies also state that NPS will strive to understand and preserve the soil resources of park units and prevent, to the extent possible, the unnatural erosion, physical removal, or contamination of the soil, or its contamination of other resources.

There are no significant topographic or geologic features within the project area, and the area has been previously disturbed. Negligible adverse impacts to the park topography would result as the proposed park improvements would displace and disturb soils. All construction activities would be performed in accordance with the Texas Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit. This permit would ensure that all soil disturbing activities are properly managed. As a result of these efforts, it is anticipated that the potential impacts to soils would be sufficiently reduced as to constitute only minor impacts. The proposed park improvements would result in negligible to minor, temporary and permanent adverse effects to topography, geology, and soils. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Paleontological Resources

According to NPS Management Policies 2006, paleontological resources (fossils), including both organic and mineralized remains in body or trace form, will be protected, preserved, and managed for public education, interpretation, and scientific research. Appropriate steps would be taken to protect any paleontological resources that are inadvertently discovered during construction activities. Should currently unidentified paleontological resources be discovered during project implementation, work in that location would stop until the resources are properly evaluated and avoided if necessary. As the proposed park improvements would not disturb any known paleontological sites, the effect of the improvements on these resources is expected to be negligible. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

The Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981, as amended, requires federal agencies to consider adverse effects to prime and unique farmlands that would result in the conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses. Prime or unique farmland is classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and is defined as soil that particularly produces general crops such as common foods, forage, fiber, and oil seed; unique farmland produces specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Some soils within the park are considered prime farmland soils. The proposed park improvements would not result in the conversion of land to non-agricultural uses. It is anticipated that the proposed park improvements would result in a negligible impact, if any, on prime and unique farmlands. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Museum Collections

According to DO-24 *Museum Collections Management*, the NPS requires the consideration of impacts on museum collections (historic artifacts, natural specimens, and archival and manuscript material), and provides further policy guidance, standards, and requirements for preserving, protecting, documenting, and providing access to, and use of, NPS museum collections.

The proposed park improvements would result in ground disturbances during construction. These actions would be closely monitored in order to ensure that any artifacts that could be discovered are cataloged and stored appropriately. Therefore, the proposed park improvements could result in an increase in museum collections, which could be viewed as beneficial effect. In any case, effects would be minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Water Resources

NPS policies require protection of water quality consistent with the Clean Water Act of 1977 (CWA). The purpose of the CWA is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." To enact this goal, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) has been charged with evaluating federal actions that result in potential degradation of waters of the U.S. and issuing permits for actions consistent with the CWA. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also has responsibility for oversight and review of permits and actions that affect waters of the U.S.

The proposed project construction area does not contain surface waters, and is not anticipated to affect ground water. All construction activities would be performed in accordance with the Texas Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit. Conditions of the permit would ensure that unacceptable impacts to water quality do not result from construction activities. To minimize erosion and protect water quality, disturbed areas would be revegetated and re-contoured following construction. Storm water management infrastructure would also be included in the project to ensure that storm water is effectively managed in the lower elevation of the cultural landscape restoration area. With these measures, and due to the fact that no surface waters are located in or near the project area, the proposed park improvements would result in no or negligible effects to water resources. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management requires all federal agencies to avoid construction within the 100-year floodplain unless no other practicable alternative exists. NPS under NPS Management Policies 2006 and DO-77-2 Floodplain Management will strive to preserve floodplain values and minimize hazardous floodplain conditions. According to DO-77-2 Floodplain Management, certain construction within a 100-year floodplain requires preparation of a Statement of Findings for floodplains.

All of the proposed park improvements lie outside of the 100-year floodplain (Map # 48029C0580G, September 29, 2010) (FEMA 2011). The proposed park improvements would not impact floodplain values and functions of flood risks to development. Therefore, a Statement of Findings for floodplains would not be prepared. As there would be no effects to floodplains, this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Wetlands

For regulatory purposes under § 404 of the CWA, the term wetlands means "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas."

Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands requires federal agencies to avoid adversely impacting wetlands, where possible. Further, §404 of the CWA authorizes the USACE to prohibit or regulate, through a permitting process, the discharge of dredged or fill material within waters of the U.S. NPS policies for wetlands as stated in NPS Management Policies 2006 and DO-77-1 Wetlands Protection strive to prevent the loss or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. In accordance with DO-77-1, proposed actions that have the potential to adversely impact wetlands must be addressed in a Statement of Findings for wetlands.

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps show that no wetlands have been documented within the area of the proposed park improvements. This finding was confirmed by SAAN staff during the preparation of this document. A Statement of Findings for wetlands would not be prepared. As there would be no effects to wetlands, this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Vegetation

According to NPS's 2006 Management Policies, NPS strives to maintain all components and processes of naturally evolving park unit ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of plants (NPS 2006).

Vegetation at Mission San José consists of native and non-native species of trees, shrubs, grasses, forbs, and ground covers. The majority of the site is planted with meadow grasses and canopy trees such as mesquite and hackberry, with small groupings of shrubs such as yucca. For the most part, vegetation is well maintained within the park. Although some vegetation remains as it was during the Spanish Colonial times, the vegetative landscape has been altered by the increase of settlement which has brought increased exotic vegetation (Cogan 2007).

Within the compound, an attempt has been made to evoke the historic feeling of the use of fruit bearing vegetation by planting fig and pomegranate shrubs. Some existing vegetation is ornamental. In the vicinity of the Harris House, the plantings are more dense and ornamental. The area around the Franciscan monastery has been planted with many ornamental trees and shrubs as well, such as a hedge of oleander and planting beds of shrubs and annuals edged with decorative concrete borders, particularly east of the parish chapel. Hedgerows of volunteer species, some of which are invasive exotics, occur along some of the fencelines (NPS 1995).

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and NPS formed the USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program to cooperatively inventory and map the vegetation in the U.S. National Parks. According to the study, (Cogan 2007), vegetation at and surrounding the area of the proposed park improvements was classified into the following groups:

- Bermuda grass herbaceous Alliance
- Live Oak Temporarily Flooded Forest Alliance
- Honey Mesquite - Granjeno / Prickly-pear species - South Texas Ericameria Woodland
- Huisache - (Honey Mesquite) Woodland (northeast of San José Drive)
- Pecan - Sugarberry Forest (northeast of San Jose Drive)
- Park Facilities vegetation

The proposed park improvements would result in a small loss of tree cover and would likely increase the amount of maintained grass cover. Vegetation removal would likely involve both native and introduced species. Within the San José Drive loop, maintained park facility vegetation, Bermuda grass herbaceous alliance and a small portion of live oak temporary flooded forest alliance would be impacted. Impacts to these vegetation types would be adverse, site-specific, long-term and negligible.

The extension of the open space area across San José Drive and the associated surrounding trails would impact a small area of huisache-woodland and pecan-sugarberry forest. It is anticipated that these impacts would be limited to the edge of the vegetation type and would be associated with the removal of the roadbed and grading and clearing in order to combine the two "bowls" and create a larger area of open space. These impacts would be adverse, site-specific, long-term and minor.

The spread of nonnative species within the park has been documented in previous vegetation studies, and efforts have been taken to remove invasives from the park. Activities that involve ground disturbance have the potential to create areas that can easily be colonized by invasive species. Additionally, construction equipment can often unwillingly transport invasive species from outside areas. Proper care with construction equipment, as well as appropriate landscaping practices would minimize the effects of nonnative and invasive species associated with proposed park improvements.

As the potential effects to vegetation are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Wildlife

According to NPS's 2006 Management Policies, NPS strives to maintain all components and processes of naturally evolving park unit ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of animals (NPS 2006).

Bexar County lies on the edge of the Balcones Escarpment, in a transition region between the Edwards Plateau and the Rio Grande Plain to the south. This creates a great diversity of ecological features, which in turn provides habitat for a great diversity of plants and animals. However, only a small portion of those ecological features or habitats are contained within the boundaries of SAAN (Duran, 2004). Despite this, there are 318 species of wildlife documented within SAAN (NPS 2011).

Birds are most numerous, with 222 species and counting. Species to note include the Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle Americana*), Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*), and the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*). The federally listed threatened and endangered Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) also occasionally migrates through the park (SAAN 2011). Thirty-eight species of herptofauna (reptiles and amphibians) have been documented as well. This includes seven species of frogs and toads; six species of turtles; six lizards; and 19 snakes. Commonly encountered species include Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), Ground Skinks (*Scincella lateralis*), and the Diamondback Water Snake (*Crotalus atrox*).

The 31 mammals are found in the park and include six species of mice, five species of bats, foxes, coyotes, deer, and raccoons. Armadillos and Collared Peccaries are also sometimes observed (SAAN, 2011). Twenty-seven species of fish inhabit park waters, the acequias contain the same species as the river and creeks. Common species include largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*), five species of shiner (*Notropis sp.*), and four species of sunfish (*Lepomis sp.*) (SAAN 2011).

Due to the urban nature of Mission San José and its vicinity, wildlife inhabiting the area is generally considered common, and tolerant of moderate amounts of disturbance. The loss of some woody cover would have a negative effect on wildlife; however similar habitats can be found in surrounding areas. The proposed project could result in the increase in visitor traffic. This could result in an adverse, local, short-term and negligible impact to the wildlife and wildlife habitat in the immediate vicinity of the proposed park improvements. The impact would result from disturbances caused by the increased visitor traffic but it would be short-term as wildlife would be relocated to adjacent habitat. As the potential effects to wildlife are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Threatened, Endangered, Rare, and Protected Species

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires examination of impacts on all federally-listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires all federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitats. In addition, the NPS Management Policies 2006 and DO-77 Natural Resources Management Guidelines require NPS to examine the impacts on federal candidate species, as well as state-listed threatened, endangered, candidate, rare, declining, and sensitive species.

There are no federally listed plant or wildlife species known to occur near Mission San José or within the project area. This was confirmed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Recreation databases and by written response from those agencies. Two species listed by the State of Texas as threatened have been observed within SAAN: the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and the Texas tortoise (*Gopherus berlandieri*). No effect to the Texas tortoise is anticipated as a result of the proposed park improvements as there is no suitable habitat within the project area and surveys in 2010 and 2011 failed to locate any individuals. The peregrine falcon is a rarely sighted migrant in the park and should not be affected either.

Thus, no effects to federally threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species are anticipated as a result of the proposed park improvements. However, walking surveys would still be performed prior to any construction activities. Based on the data and this mitigation measure, it is anticipated that there would be no effects to threatened, endangered, rare or protected species and this topic is therefore dismissed from further analysis.

Indian Trust Resources

Secretarial Order 3175 requires that any anticipated impacts to Indian trust resources from a proposed project or action by the Department of Interior agencies be explicitly addressed in environmental documents. The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the U.S. to protect tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and it represents a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

The lands comprising the park are not held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indians due to their status as Indians. As there are no Indian trust resources, this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Soundscapes

In accordance with NPS Management Policies 2006 and DO-47 Sound Preservation and Noise Management, an important component of the NPS mission is the preservation of natural soundscapes associated with national park units. Natural soundscapes exist in the absence of human-caused sound. The natural ambient soundscape is the aggregate of all the natural sounds that occur in park units, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds. Natural sounds occur within and beyond the range of sounds that humans can perceive and can be transmitted through air, water, or solid materials. The frequencies, magnitudes, and durations of human-caused sound considered acceptable vary among NPS units as well as potentially throughout each park unit, being generally greater in developed areas and less in undeveloped areas.

Existing sounds in this area are most often generated from vehicular traffic (visitors and employees entering/leaving the park), and from traffic travelling on Roosevelt Avenue. It is unlikely that any impacts to soundscapes would extend west of this transportation corridor. An

increase in park patrons has the potential to negligibly increase noise levels associated with the park.

During construction, human-caused sounds would likely increase due to construction activities, equipment, vehicular traffic, and construction crews. Any sounds generated from construction would be temporary, lasting only as long as the construction activity is generating the sounds, and would have a negligible to minor adverse impact on visitors and employees.

Based on the existing noise levels in and around the park, and as effects to soundscapes are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Lightscaapes

In accordance with NPS Management Policies 2006, NPS strives to preserve natural ambient lightscaapes, which are natural resources and values that exist in the absence of human caused light. No additional lighting is anticipated as part of the proposed improvements, this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Socioeconomics

Mission San José is located within a U.S. Census block group (Block Group ID 480291508002) where 56.83 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and the per capita income is \$12,817. Implementation of the proposed park improvements could provide a negligible beneficial impact to the economies near the Mission San José due to minimal increases in employment opportunities for the construction workforce and revenues for local businesses and governments generated from these additional construction activities and workers. Any increase in workforce and revenue, however, would be temporary and negligible, lasting only as long as construction. Beneficial, long-term, minor impacts to the local economy could result from an increase in park patrons. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities. The population of the U.S. Census block in which Mission San José is located is 13.3 percent minority, and adjacent blocks range from 0 to 100 percent minority. As the rehabilitated landscape would be available for use by all park staff and visitors regardless of race or income, and the construction workforces would not be hired based on their race or income, the proposed action would not have disproportionate health or environmental effects on minorities or low-income populations or communities, this topic is therefore dismissed from further analysis.

Land Use

The area surrounding Mission San José is predominantly residential, with some commercial development. The park is bordered by two zones of restricted development in order to protect the mission landscape, the River Improvement Overlay District number 5 (RIO-5) to the east along the San Antonio River, and the Roosevelt Avenue Corridor Overlay to the west. The proposed project would neither change local and regional land use nor appreciably impact local businesses or other agencies.

Current open space/recreational areas would be maintained and the current land use enhanced. Vegetation removal associated with the creation of pedestrian trails within the wooded areas would not affect the overall wooded area land use character. The proposed park improvements would therefore be appropriate considering the importance of the use of the land throughout the history of Mission San José. It is anticipated that the proposed improvements would therefore enhance the existing nature of the area rather than impact established land uses. As the effects to land use are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Air Quality

The Clean Air Act of 1963 (42 USC 7401 et seq.) was established to promote the public health and welfare by protecting and enhancing the nation's air quality. The act establishes specific programs that provide special protection for air resources and air quality related values associated with NPS units. Section 118 of the Clean Air Act requires a park unit to meet all federal, state, and local air pollution standards. Further, the Clean Air Act provides that the federal land manager has an affirmative responsibility to protect air quality related values (including visibility, plants, animals, soils, water quality, cultural resources, and visitor health) from adverse pollution impacts.

The park area is designated a Class II area under the Clean Air Act. The park's air quality is good, except for ground-level ozone during the hot season (May through October). Construction activities such as hauling materials and operating heavy equipment could result in temporary increases of vehicle exhaust, emissions, and fugitive dust in the general project area. Any exhaust, emissions, and fugitive dust generated from construction activities would be temporary and localized and would likely dissipate rapidly.

The operation of the proposed park improvements is not anticipated to result in the degradation of local air quality. Negligible benefits could result through the addition of pedestrian trail facilities, which could reduce vehicle miles travelled. The Class II air quality designation for the park would not be affected by the proposed park improvements. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

Climate Change

Although climatologists are unsure about the long-term results of global climate change, it is clear that the planet is experiencing a warming trend that affects ocean currents, sea levels, polar sea ice, and global weather patterns. Although these changes will likely affect winter precipitation patterns and amounts in SAAN, it would be speculative to predict localized changes in temperature, precipitation, or other weather changes, in part because there are many variables that are not fully understood and there may be variables not currently defined. Impacts from construction equipment emissions would be temporary and would not measurably contribute to global climate change. As these effects are minor or less in degree this topic is dismissed from further analysis.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two action alternatives, the moderate action alternative and the maximum action alternative, and the no-action alternative were originally identified for this project. These alternatives were presented to the public during a project scoping meeting and discussed with an interdisciplinary team of NPS employees during the project planning workshop held in March 2011. Based on the review and careful consideration of the public comments (as summarized in *Consultation and Coordination* Section), it was clear that there was public opposition to the maximum action alternative. The interdisciplinary team decided during the March 2011 workshop that a revised alternative, which combined elements of each of the previously considered action alternatives, would be developed. The workshop resulted in a determination of the final definition of project objectives as described in the *Purpose and Need*, and the development of a revised alternative that would meet the project objectives, which became the preferred alternative.

The moderate action alternative (alternative 1) and the preferred action alternative (alternative 2) as well as the no-action alternative are carried forward for further evaluation in this EA. A layout of the no-action alternative is presented in **Figure 2**. Conceptual layouts of each of the action alternatives are presented in **Figures 3 and 4**. The dismissed maximum action alternative is discussed under *Alternatives Considered and Dismissed* presented later in this section. A summary table comparing alternative components is also at the end of this section.

Alternatives Considered

No – Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications to the current park infrastructure or landscape would be made. Should the no-action alternative be selected, the cultural landscape would not be rehabilitated and visitor services would not be enhanced.

Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Alternative 1 includes the following elements:

Landscape Restoration/Creation of Open Space - A portion of the the cultural landscape would be restored by combining the Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl.” Using heavy equipment, the space would be landscaped and graded to create an approximately 39,000 square foot open-space gathering and event area. The area adjacent to Harris House would serve as an extended outdoor education area, with additional graded and grassed terraces, designed to connect with the other area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded or replanted with native plant material and established with temporary irrigation.

Parking Lot - As the current Harris House parking lot generally does not meet current parking needs it would be redesigned and relocated farther west.

Pedestrian Trails - A hard surfaced pedestrian trail would be created from the existing gravel overflow parking lot, following the general alignment of San José Drive and connecting to Roosevelt Avenue. This segment of new pedestrian trail would create a connection to the existing Graham Trail. The pedestrian trails around the Grist Mill would also be reconfigured to provide enhanced access to the existing lawn area near the mill.

Maintenance/Storage Area - The existing maintenance/storage area would be reconfigured and a new facility that includes a restroom would be built. The future parking lot and the existing maintenance/storage area would be used as staging areas for construction equipment and materials.



Figure 2 – No-Action Alternative

ALTERNATIVE 1: MODERATE ACTION

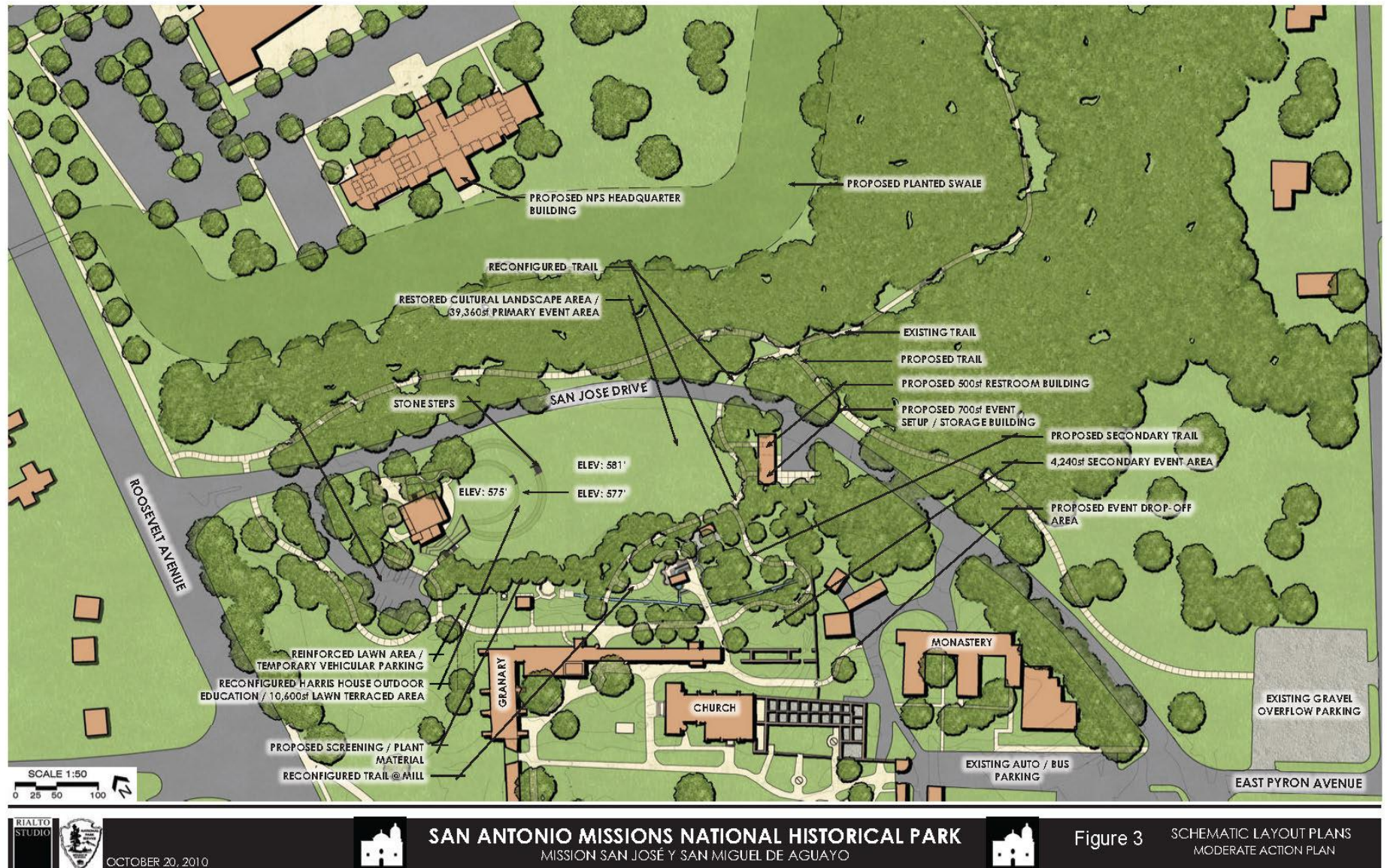
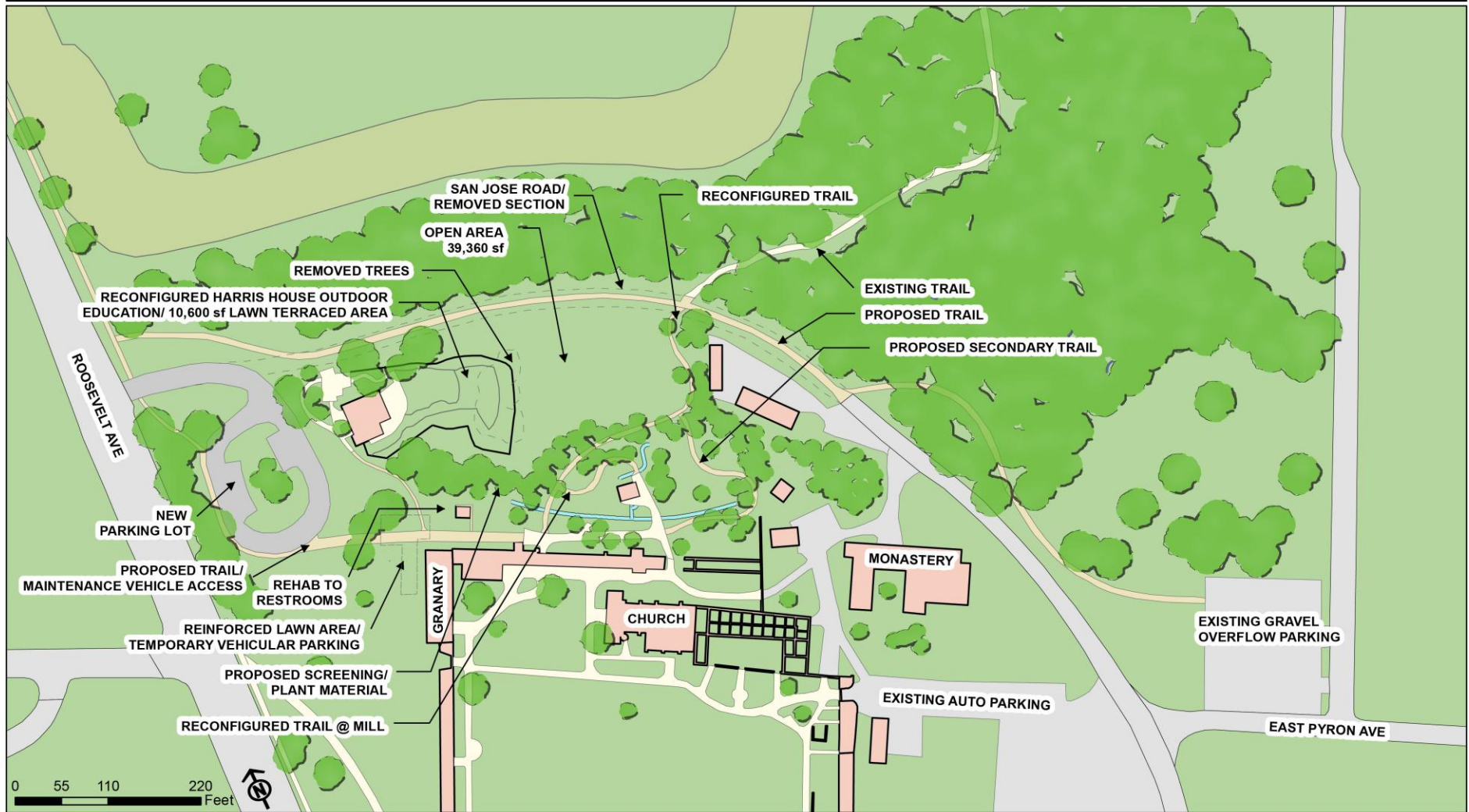


Figure 3 – Moderate Action Alternative

ALTERNATIVE 2: PREFERRED ACTION



AUGUST 2014

SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

MISSION SAN JOSÉ Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO

Figure 4

SCHEMATIC LAYOUT PLANS
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (revised Alternative 2)

Figure 4 – Preferred Action Alternative

Alternative 2 – Preferred Action

Alternative 2 includes the elements discussed as Alternative 1 with these notable differences:

San Jose Drive – Over 800 feet would be closed and removed to allow for the further expansion and restoration of the cultural landscape. Access to the monastery would be maintained by retaining a small portion of San José Drive at the intersection of East Pyron Avenue.

Landscape Restoration/Creation of Open Space - The Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl” would remain largely as is with only the removal of earth and woody vegetation between the “bowls” to combine the space. There would still be a large open area suitable for small events or gatherings, but it would be unimproved and not designed to facilitate events.

Parking Lot - The parking lot adjacent to the Harris House would be more extensively rebuilt, being enlarged to accommodate bus turnarounds, and moved closer to Roosevelt Avenue.

Pedestrian Trails - The pedestrian trail along San José Drive would be shifted slightly south in order to place in on the old roadbed.

Maintenance/Storage Area - The existing area would not change and a separate adaptive use restroom would be created near the Granary using an existing stone building.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures were developed to minimize the degree and/or severity of adverse impacts that would result from the implementation of the action alternatives.

Design:

- Pedestrian trails would be designed and installed in a manner that is consistent with existing trails in terms of width and materials used.
- Sustainable building technologies would be incorporated into all of the proposed project improvements.
- The NPS would ensure through design approach that additions, alterations, or related new construction would not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. New features would be designed in a way that they are differentiated from the old but are also compatible with the historic materials, features, and massing of the landscape.
- Additions and adjacent or related new construction would be designed in such a way that should the structure need to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired.
- Comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered would precede actual physical work as defined by the Section 106 coordination process. All SHPO required mitigation measures would be in place prior to any physical work being undertaken.
- A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) would be developed during project design and implemented and maintained during construction to minimize impacts as specified by EPA regulations for construction projects. The SW3P would include both construction and staging areas.

Construction:

- 1 • Construction materials and labor would be sourced locally to the greatest extent possible.
- 2 • Construction zones, particularly for the open space gathering area and parking lot, would be
- 3 identified and fenced with construction tape or some similar material prior to any
- 4 construction activity. The fencing would define the construction zone and confine the
- 5 activity to the minimum area required for construction. All protection measures would be
- 6 clearly stated in the construction specifications, and workers would be instructed to avoid
- 7 conducting activities beyond the construction zone as defined by the construction zone
- 8 fencing.
- 9 • Since disturbed soils are susceptible to erosion until revegetation takes place, standard
- 10 erosion control measures such as silt fences and/or sand bags would be used to minimize
- 11 any potential soil erosion.
- 12 • Re-vegetation and re-contouring of disturbed areas would take place following construction.
- 13 Re-vegetation efforts would rely primarily on the use of native vegetation. The replacement
- 14 of non-native Bermuda and St. Augustine grasses with native grasses as the primary ground
- 15 cover is preferable. Planting would include only native trees, primarily mesquite, live oak,
- 16 cedar elm, flowering or desert willow, redbud, and pecan.
- 17 • Weed control methods would be implemented to minimize the introduction of noxious
- 18 weeds. Construction equipment would be washed prior to entering the work site.
- 19 • Fugitive dust generated by construction would be controlled by spraying water on the
- 20 construction site, if necessary.
- 21 • To reduce noise and emissions, construction equipment would not be permitted to idle for
- 22 long periods of time.
- 23 • Construction personnel would be responsible for ensuring trash is properly disposed of and
- 24 not left uncontained onsite overnight. A trash abatement and recycling program would be
- 25 initiated during pre-construction phases of the project, and would continue throughout the
- 26 duration of the project.
- 27 • To minimize possible petrochemical leaks from construction equipment, the contractor would
- 28 regularly monitor and check construction equipment to identify and repair any leaks.
- 29 • All ground penetrating activities would be monitored by a professional archeologist.
- 30 • Should construction unearth previously undiscovered cultural resources, work would be
- 31 stopped in the area of any discovery, and the park would consult with the state historic
- 32 preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as necessary,
- 33 according to §36 CFR 800.13, *Post Review Discoveries*. In the unlikely event that human
- 34 remains are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American
- 35 Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) would be followed.
- 36 • The NPS would ensure that all contractors and subcontractors are informed of the penalties
- 37 for illegally collecting artifacts or intentionally damaging paleontological materials,
- 38 archeological sites, or historic properties. Contractors and subcontractors would also be
- 39 instructed on procedures to follow in case previously unknown paleontological or
- 40 archeological resources are uncovered during construction.
- 41 • Walking surveys would be performed by NPS personnel prior to any activities that have the
- 42 potential to harm or displace wildlife. These surveys would identify any significant wildlife
- 43 habitation areas such as burrows or nests. Should the presence of nesting wildlife or

species of interest be detected during these surveys, management strategies would be implemented to ensure that construction activities do not impact wildlife.

- If construction activities are scheduled within the nesting season for birds protected under the MBTA, generally April 1 through July 15, pre-construction surveys would be conducted for nests. No construction activities would be conducted in identified nesting areas until the young have fledged.
- Contractors and subcontractors would be instructed on procedures to follow should wildlife species of interest be encountered during construction.

Operations:

- Air quality would be preserved through such things as using propane mowers instead of gasoline-burning models and encouraging staff and volunteers to take public transportation when possible.
- Event scheduling would need to be carefully coordinated to ensure that adequate staffing is available for management and enforcement, particularly if an event at the open space gathering area coincides with an event within the interior compound of Mission San José.
- At the discretion of SAAN personnel, events held at the open space gathering area must be complementary to the parks goals and objectives.

Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

A maximum action alternative was originally proposed during initial project planning. Based on input from the public and interest groups, it was clear that this alternative was not favored (please refer to *Project Coordination* section for additional discussion). Concerns raised included the large open space gathering area that would be created, and the potential that the larger space would encourage the hosting of events that are not complementary to the park goals or objectives. Further concerns were raised regarding the proposed construction of a new restroom/storage building complex which would introduce additional structures into the mission landscape.

As a result of these concerns, the maximum action alternative was dismissed from further analysis and a revised, limited action alternative was developed. As previously discussed, the preferred action alternative (or Alternative 2) proposes a small, unimproved open space gathering area with restrictions on the type of events, and eliminates the new restroom/storage building complex from the proposed park improvements by using a more centrally located existing building for a new restroom.

Alternative Summaries

Table 2 summarizes the major components of the alternatives and compares the ability of these alternatives to meet the project objectives (the objectives for this project are identified in the *Purpose and Need* chapter). As shown in the following table, Alternative 1 meets the majority of the objectives of the project and Alternative 2 fully meets all of the objectives identified for this project, while the no-action alternative does not address the objectives.

Table 3 summarizes the anticipated environmental impacts for the No-action alternative and Alternatives 1 and 2. Only those impact topics that have been carried forward for further analysis are included in this table. The *Environmental Consequences* section provides a more detailed explanation of these impacts.

Table 2 – Alternatives Summary and Project Objectives

Project Objectives	No-Action Alternative	Alternative 1 – Moderate Action	Alternative 2 – Preferred Action
	Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to park infrastructure. The modified cultural landscape would remain in place and local connectivity would not be addressed.	Under Alternative 1, the Huisache and Harris House “bowls” would be combined and heavily landscaped to create a large area for events. The Harris House parking lot would be improved. Additional trails would be constructed. A maintenance/ storage/restroom building would be built.	Alternative 2 would have much of the same elements as Alternative 1 but would include the removal of San José Drive, with a trail put there, and a better parking lot, and would not include a large landscaped event area or construction of a maintenance/ storage/restroom building (but would modify an existing building for a restroom).
Address the greatly modified cultural landscape north of Mission San José	Does not meet objective	Partially meets objective - does not remove the road berm and therefore limits cultural landscape rehabilitation. Also introduces a new building.	Fully meets objective. Removes road berm and does not introduce new buildings; thus, larger cultural landscape rehabilitation area would result.
Reduce the risk of damage to the park’s historic resources and infrastructure by creating an alternative open space gathering area through cultural landscape rehabilitation.	Does not meet objective	Fully meets objective. Creates large improved open space gathering area.	Fully meets objective. Creates unimproved open space gathering area, albeit smaller.
Enhance the park visitor experience in a manner that is consistent with park’s mission statement and protection of park resources.	Does not meet objective	Fully meets objective. Restored cultural landscape, new trails, better open space, restroom, and improved parking lot all enhance the visitor experience.	Fully meets objective. Restored cultural landscape, new trails, better open space, restroom, and improved parking lot all enhance the visitor experience.

Table 3 – Environmental Impact Summary

Impact Topic	No-Action Alternative	Alternative 1 -Moderate Action	Alternative 2 – Preferred Action
Cultural Landscape	Adverse, long-term, minor impacts on the cultural landscape due to not changing the current modified landscape.	Beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact. Some modifications of the cultural landscape removed (fill), but a new non-contributing feature introduced (new restroom building).	Beneficial, local, long-term major impact. No new features introduced and much modification removed from the cultural landscape, including a portion of San Jose Drive.
Historic Structures and Districts	No direct or indirect impacts to historic structures or the district.	Beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate effect. No removals or replacements of structures but removal of both visual and some physical barriers which would allow for landscape restoration and enhancing the historic district.	Beneficial local, long-term, moderate impact. Similar to Alternative 1, but with more landscape restoration, removal of an additional barrier, and adaptive use of a historic building for restroom.
Archeological Resources	Beneficial, indirect, site-specific, long-term and negligible impact to archeological resources. No changes made to the landscape and existing archeological resources would be preserved.	Adverse or beneficial, site-specific or local, short- and/or long-term, and minor to moderate impact. The implementation of Alternative 1 could disturb archeological resources during construction activities and fill removal, but these disturbances could also contribute to the Spanish colonial archeological record.	Adverse or beneficial, site-specific or local, short- and/or long-term, and minor to moderate impact. Very similar to Alternative 1 but with greater chance to disturb archeological resources during construction/fill removal, as well as more contributions to the Spanish colonial archeological record, from the removal of a portion of San Jose Drive.
Visitor Use and Experience	Adverse, long-term, minor impacts to visitor use and experience would result. Reliance on inadequate parking and restroom facilities, and insufficient area available for public gatherings would continue to result in traffic jams, user conflicts, and resource impacts outside the project area.	Beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact. The removal of barriers and other modifications of the cultural landscape, creation of a large area of event space, addition of new trails and a restroom, and enhanced parking would all aide visitor use and improve the experience.	Beneficial, local, long-term, moderate to major impact. Similar impacts as Alternative 1, but with increased benefits to visitors due to a better parking lot and the removal of San Jose Drive and its traffic.

Impact Topic	No-Action Alternative	Alternative 1 -Moderate Action	Alternative 2 – Preferred Action
Park Operations and Management	Adverse, indirect, local, long-term, minor impacts to visitor use and experience. Reliance on inadequate parking and restroom facilities, and insufficient area available for public gatherings would continue to result in traffic jams, user conflicts, and resource impacts. The park would continue to have to pull staff from other projects and duties in order to manage traffic, enforce appropriate visitor use, and repair damaged resources. In addition, current operations and management structures may not be sufficient to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitor traffic.	Adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term and moderate impact on park operations and management. Increased need for ranger presence and enforcement, especially due to the new trails and increase in human traffic in previously under-utilized or un-utilized areas of the park. Additional costs for operation and maintenance of new features may be incurred as well.	Adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term, and moderate impact on park operations and management. Very similar to Alternative 1, but operations and management would be somewhat easier from the better parking lot and closing of San Jose Drive.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

According to the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (43 CFR 46.30), the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative “that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. The environmentally preferable alternative is identified upon consideration and weighing by the Responsible Official of long-term environmental impacts against short-term impacts in evaluating what is the best protection of these resources. In some situations, such as when different alternatives impact different resources to different degrees, there may be more than one environmentally preferable alternative.”

Overall the No Action Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative because there would be no activities that would disturb elements of the biological and physical environment. With no new construction or ground disturbing activities, this alternative best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. Existing conditions would be maintained and no new adverse effects to the environment would occur.

Preferred Alternative

New information came forward from public scoping and consultation with other agencies that led to the development of a new alternative, Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative. This new alternative eliminated some of the developments that were objectionable to the public, but retained the key features desired by the park to meet the project objectives. While Alternative 2 is not the environmentally preferable alternative, it better accomplishes the project objectives of the proposal, and would not significantly impact natural or cultural resources. With the specified mitigation measures in place, Alternative 2 better achieves a balance between visitor use and enjoyment and conservation of park resources, by restoring a portion of the cultural landscape and providing improved parking and pedestrian trails to create and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surrounding along San Jose Drive. Therefore, Alternative 2 is considered the NPS preferred alternative and will be referred to as such for the remainder of the document.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter analyzes the potential environmental consequences, or impacts, that would occur as a result of implementing the proposed project. Resources analyzed in this chapter include: cultural landscapes, historic structures and districts and archeological resources. Visitor use and experience and park operations are also analyzed in addition to the resources listed. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, as well as impairment are analyzed for each resource topic carried forward. Impairment analysis is included in **Appendix A**. Potential impacts are described in terms of type, context, duration, and intensity. General definitions of terms are provided below, while more specific impact thresholds are given for each resource at the beginning of each resource section.

- **Type** describes the classification of the impact as either beneficial or adverse, direct or indirect:
 - *Beneficial*: A positive change in the condition or appearance of the resource or a change that moves the resource toward a desired condition.
 - *Adverse*: A change that moves the resource away from a desired condition or detracts from its appearance or condition.
 - *Direct*: An impact that is caused by an action and occurs in the same time and place.
 - *Indirect*: An impact that is caused by an action but is later in time or farther removed in distance, but is still reasonably foreseeable.
- **Context** describes the area or location in which the impact would occur. Are the effects site-specific, local, regional, or even broader?
- **Duration** describes the length of time an effect would occur, either short-term or long-term:
 - *Short-term*: Impacts generally last only during construction, and the resources resume their pre-construction conditions following construction.
 - *Long-term*: Impacts last beyond the construction period, and the resources may not resume their pre-construction conditions for a longer period of time following construction.
- **Intensity** describes the degree, level, or strength of an impact. For this analysis, intensity has been categorized into negligible, minor, moderate, and major. Because definitions of intensity vary by resource topic, intensity definitions are provided separately for each impact topic analyzed in this EA.

Cumulative Effects

The CEQ regulations, which implement NEPA of 1969 (42 USC 4321 et seq.), require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative effects are defined as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative effects are considered for both the no-action and action alternatives.

Cumulative effects were determined by combining the impacts of the alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Therefore, it was necessary to identify other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future projects at SAAN and, where applicable, the

surrounding area. The geographic scope for this analysis includes elements mostly within and adjacent to the park's boundaries, while the temporal scope includes projects within a range of approximately 5 to 10 years. Given this, the following projects were identified for the purpose of conducting the cumulative effects analysis:

San Juan Demonstration Farm and Associated Services

Survival of the mission communities rested on their being able to be self-sustaining. The crops cultivated at Mission San Juan characterized the mission landscape and served both as staples and as commodities for sale or trade with the presidio, other missions, and other civilian communities in the area. The park GMP/DCP therefore identifies the mission as an economic center as an important interpretive theme for Mission San Juan. Today the landscape surrounding Mission San Juan has changed considerably from the Spanish colonial landscape as it has been manipulated for various uses. The purpose of the proposed project is to develop a Spanish colonial demonstration farm and associated support services at Mission San José. The development of the demonstration farm would provide benefits to visitor use and experience while increasing the cultural integrity of the setting and promote connectivity to local development initiatives which are complementary to the park's mission statement.

Dependent on the outcome of the project planning process, important elements of this project could include re-introducing farming activities on the historic labores (agricultural fields). Creating the associated supporting infrastructure would include a barn, a reconstructed asphalt parking lot, a visitor center, and various pedestrian trails. Environmental clearance for the project was completed in 2012 and this project is being implemented.

San Antonio River Improvement Project

The SARIP is a multi-year project that is currently underway which aims to restore and enhance 13 miles of the San Antonio River both north and south of downtown San Antonio. The project is a collaborative effort between the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, SARA, the USACE, and the San Antonio River Foundation. Enhancements include flood control, amenities, ecosystem restoration and recreational improvements (SARIP 2011).

SARIP is comprised of four distinctive reaches: the Museum Reach, a four-mile segment of the river from Hildebrand Avenue south to Lexington Avenue; the Downtown Reach, a segment of the original River Walk from Lexington Avenue to Houston Street; the Eagleland, a one-mile segment from South Alamo to Lonestar Boulevard; and the Mission Reach, an eight-mile section of the river extending from Lonestar Boulevard south to Loop 410 South (SARIP 2011). The Mission Reach is in close proximity to Mission San José.

The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project will restore riverine features and riparian woodlands, reintroduce native plants, enhance aquatic habitat, and reconnect the river to the historic missions that relied on it hundreds of years ago. The connections will be made through the development of "mission portals." These portals will be located at Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan and Mission Espada. The portals will feature historic and artistic interpretations of the story of the missions and highlight their social and cultural importance to the area. The portals will reinforce the importance of the river to the missions and encourage visitors to circulate between the missions and the river.

Before the river was channelized in the 1950-60s, it meandered through the city, passing near San Antonio's historic missions. Today, the old river channel is still evident. The Mission Reach project will also restore two historic remnants of the river. The result will allow park visitors to see how the river may have looked 250 years ago at the height of the mission period (SARIP 2011).

Project planners have worked closely with NPS to ensure that relationship of the river and the missions are clearly illustrated and that the portals are included in all park planning initiatives. Bexar County provided funding for the portals, with additional private funding provided by the San Antonio River Foundation (SARIP 2011).

Re-Watering the San Juan Acequia

The San Juan acequia was begun in 1731 and was used for watering farmland on the east side of the San Antonio River. The acequia begins on the east bank of the river, across from Mission San José, and flows south. It is thought that the acequia watered over 500 acres, and was operated by an incorporated company as late as the 1920s (Guerra 1987). A joint venture to return water to the acequia system between SAAN, the City of San Antonio, Los Compadres, the Conservation Society, and the SARA was completed in 2011.

San Juan Acequia Trail

As an extension of the SARIP, a trail is planned along the historic San Juan Acequia. The trail will lead from the Diversion Dam to south of Mission Espada, crossing the river, and going northward to Mission Espada. The second trail would be aligned towards the south, between the San Antonio River and the western wall of the mission compound, before turning east, crossing the acequia and then turning south, generally following the alignment of the acequia passing to the south of the re-established labores.

Mission Reach Hike/Bike Trail

The Mission Reach Hike and Bike Trail runs from Mission Concepción to Mission Espada, with over 15 miles of dedicated paved pathways that are reserved for the hiker and biker, offering scenic views and local trail connectivity. The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project was completed in October, 2013 and is being managed by SARA.

Mission Library

Construction of the Mission Library was completed in 2011. The building is located on the historic Mission Drive-in property, adjacent to Mission San José. The library will be an important community facility serving as a place of both learning and as a community focal point for local residents. It is anticipated that the library's mission and purpose will be complementary to that of SAAN and that a long-term partnerships and learning opportunities will result.

Invasive Species Control Program

SAAN ecological studies have documented 318 wildlife species within the park. This includes 23 species of non-native animals. Non-native animals often adversely affect native flora and fauna by displacing or consuming native animals and their habitat. The park has an ongoing program in place to control the populations of some non-native species, focusing on those that cause the most damage to native plants and wildlife such as feral pigs. These efforts also include a program for managing invasive non-native vegetation within the park, which has been in effect since 2000 (SAAN 2011).

Cultural Landscapes

Affected Environment

The cultural landscape of Mission San José is comprehensively analyzed and reported in the "Mission San José Cultural Landscape Report", NPS 1995. According to the report, Mission San José, is a significant cultural landscape that contributes to an understanding of the role of the mission in Spanish colonial settlement in the American Southwest and, more specifically, in the

San Antonio vicinity. In addition, the mission represents an important early twentieth-century historic preservation project exemplary of both private and public efforts of that period (NPS 1995).

Mission San José is also a nationally significant National Register property. It possesses sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It meets the listing requirements of the National Register under Criteria A, C, and D. (Please refer to the *Historic Structures and Districts* section for a more detailed discussion of how the mission meets these National Register criteria).

The 1995 study divided the Mission San José landscape into six character areas based on a comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions. Each landscape character area represents a discrete section of the site defined by a combination of physical landscape characteristics, the type and concentration of historic landscape features present, and contemporary and historic land uses as they influence and have been influenced by cluster arrangements, circulation, views, and operational activities (NPS 1995).

The six landscape character areas identified for Mission San José are the following:

- Compound Interior
- Compound Exterior
- Amphitheater
- Harris House
- Franciscan Monastery
- Visitor Center

The proposed park improvements have the potential to affect the Harris House, Amphitheatre (present day Huisache Bowl area), Compound Exterior and the Franciscan Monastery character areas.

Built in 1956, the Ethel Wilson Harris House (Harris House) area consists of the residence itself, which is currently an administrative office and learning center, as well as an asphalt entry road, a garden with stepped railroad tie retaining walls and stairs, a grass lawn, canopy trees and ornamental shrubs (NPS 1995). The residence was listed on the NRHP in 2001 under Criteria B, C, and G. The house is significant in that it was the primary residence of Ethel Wilson Harris. Ethel Wilson Harris accomplished major achievements in the areas of historic conservation, preservation, and park management. Most notably was Harris' development and promotion of traditional Hispanic arts and crafts (particularly tile and pottery works), beginning in the WPA era of the 1930s (NPS 2001).

The Amphitheater area (or Huisache Bowl) was developed during the 1911-1941 period of significance but has experienced significant change since its construction. It no longer represents its 1938 appearance. In the 1950s aluminum benches were added and it was further modified in recent times as the formal seating was removed and replaced with an amphitheater style grass lawn. Currently, the amphitheater area exhibits aspects of integrity due to continuity of land use and integrity of location (NPS 1995).

The Compound Exterior includes undeveloped open space west, south, and east of the compound walls that is marked by open fields and grassy lawns that are dotted with canopy trees. Historically, these areas, in addition to a greater landscape, served as the agricultural base for life at the mission. Adjacent development that post-dates the period of significance of the mission has resulted in diminished integrity of setting for the Compound Exterior area. The development of a number of post reconstruction era features has also affected the integrity of

the exterior. The asphalt entry road and parking area, sidewalks, and the northwest gate all detract from integrity of feeling and location (NPS 1995).

The Franciscan Monastery area is located northeast of the compound area. It is an active Franciscan parish that includes a number of buildings and structures, ornamental plantings, vehicular roads, parking areas, and pedestrian walks. The parish landscape and structures post-date the period of significance. The Franciscan Monastery area possesses strong integrity of location, feeling, and association. The monastery itself, which was constructed in 1931-32, during the latter period of significance, retains architectural integrity despite its architectural additions. The walks parallel to the building and the service road from San José Drive also date from that period and contribute to integrity of design. Additional and extensive changes since the period of significance, however, detract from the overall integrity of the area.

Impact Analysis

The 1995 Cultural Landscape Report worked to develop management strategies that would address the park's current needs while considering the above-ground landscape. As a result of this work, it was determined that a landscape rehabilitation approach for management of the above-ground landscape is appropriate.

A rehabilitation approach offers sufficient flexibility to meet interrelated but sometimes conflicting site concerns and goals as the approach allows NPS to fulfill its mission to protect cultural resources while allowing for public access and enjoyment. Rehabilitation would improve the quality or function of a cultural landscape, through repair or alteration, enabling efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining the mission's significance. Treatment for individual features, however, need to be developed and considered within the total context of Mission San José to ensure that individual treatments do not detract from the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission (NPS 1995).

NPS-28 outlines the following rehabilitation standards for historic landscapes:

- Additions, alterations, or related new construction do not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. New work is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the historic materials, features, and massing of the landscape.
- Additions and adjacent or related new construction are undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired. All proposed recommendations should be implemented in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects, the most recent *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, NPS DO-28, and the most recent *Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes*.

Impacts of No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to the existing conditions. The current modified cultural landscape along San Jose Drive would remain in place as rehabilitation activities would not take place. Adverse, long-term, minor impacts on the cultural landscape would therefore result from the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Effects: The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to affect the cultural landscape are related primarily to development around the park and other park development initiatives not related to the proposed park improvements. In addition, cumulative effects will be influenced by the continual growth of the population of the City of San Antonio.

Most actions would benefit the cultural landscape as the projects would mostly rehabilitate, enhance and protect the local historic resources. Impacts to these features would be regulated under Section 106 of the NHPA. Impacts of the actions are therefore anticipated to have an overall beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate cumulative effect on the cultural landscape. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the no-action alternative would contribute an incremental adverse, long-term, negligible to minor cumulative effect on the cultural landscape.

Impacts of Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

The primary elements of alternative 1 involve combining the Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl”, reconfiguring the Harris House parking lot and creating an outdoor education area at Harris House. These elements are located within the Harris House and Amphitheatre character areas.

The proposed park improvements would not directly impact the NRHP listed Harris House structure but it would result in modifications to Harris House contributing elements and the presumed Area of Potential Effects (APE). The garden, retaining walls, stairs, grass lawn, canopy trees and potentially the ornamental shrubs would be impacted. It is however unlikely that these modifications would diminish the properties distinctive characteristics or association with Ethel Harris. Section 106 coordination under the NHPA would be conducted during final project design. Comprehensive documentation of the features to be replaced, removed, or altered at the Harris House would precede actual physical work and the significance of the altered, or removed, historic structure features would be acknowledged through appropriate mitigation.

The amphitheater area was found to possess integrity based on its land use and location (NPS 1995). The proposed open space gathering area would be consistent with the current land use and location of the Amphitheatre/Huisache bowl and as a result is not anticipated to adversely affect the integrity of this cultural landscape resource.

These proposed modifications would allow for the removal of visual and physical barriers that do not contribute to the cultural landscape while enhancing the integrity of the landscape through the introduction of the new feature. The resultant landscape would be visually pleasing and more consistent with the periods of significance of Mission San José. This project element would therefore have a beneficial, long-term, moderate impact on the Mission San Juan cultural landscape.

Existing pedestrian trails surrounding the Grist Mill would also be reconfigured in order to promote access to the existing lawn south of the mill. The mill is an important historic resource and component of the San José cultural landscape. The pedestrian trail modification would not result in direct impacts to the mill but could affect resources within the assumed APE. Section 106 coordination under the NHPA would however be conducted during final project design. Comprehensive documentation of the features to be replaced, removed, or altered surrounding the Grist Mill would precede actual physical.

Alternative 1 also includes the development of additional pedestrian trails, and creating a new maintenance/storage/restroom building. These actions would primarily affect the Compound Exterior and the Franciscan Monastery. Previous development within and surrounding these character areas has affected the integrity of these character areas.

These supporting elements would introduce additional modern elements into the cultural landscape and would therefore result an adverse, site-specific, long-term, minor impact on the Mission San José cultural landscape.

Overall, the alternative would allow for the protection of existing cultural landscape resources, but also re-introduce existing features and new uses necessary to meet both the need for protection and public use. This alternative would enhance the interpretational, educational, and recreational opportunities for the park visitor while protecting cultural resources and allowing for public access and enjoyment. In addition, when considered within the total context of Mission San José, the individual elements the proposed park improvements would not detract from the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission or the character areas. The alternative would therefore result in an adverse or beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate impact on the cultural landscape.

All modifications that would result from the implementation of alternative 1 would be installed in accordance with NPS-28 and the Secretary's Standards. Comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered would precede actual physical work as defined by the Section 106 coordination process. If removal, replacement, or alteration occurs, the significance of the altered, removed, or destroyed cultural landscape feature would be acknowledged through appropriate mitigation.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be basically the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions would benefit the cultural landscape as the projects would mostly rehabilitate, enhance and protect the local historic structures and districts. Impacts to these features would be regulated under Section 106 of the NHPA. Impacts of the actions are therefore anticipated to have an overall a beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate cumulative effect on the cultural landscape.

The implementation of Alternative 1 would enhance the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission resulting in a beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate effect on the cultural landscape. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the implementation of Alternative 1 would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate cumulative effect to the cultural landscape.

Impacts of Alternative 2 – Preferred Action Alternative

Potential impacts to the Harris House, the Huisache Bowl/amphitheater and the Grist Mill would be the same as described under Alternative 1.

The removal of San José Drive would enable a more comprehensive restoration of the cultural landscape through the creation of more open space. This further expansion would primarily utilize the footprint of the existing San José Drive roadbed, removing the roadbed and converting the area to open space. The resultant visually pleasing, open landscape would contribute to the overall integrity of the cultural landscape as it would remove the roadway and create a larger area within the park that is complimentary to the periods of significance of Mission San José. This action would have a beneficial, long-term, major impact on the Mission San José cultural landscape.

The proposed larger parking lot and pedestrian trail realignments would continue to modify landscape characteristics and introduce new landscape features. The introduction of these project elements would result in an adverse, site-specific, long-term, minor impact on the Mission San José cultural landscape.

The proposed adaptive use restrooms would eliminate the need for an additional new maintenance/storage/restroom building as described in Alternative 1. This adaptive use would have a beneficial, long-term, minor impact on the Mission San José cultural landscape.

Overall, this alternative would further protect the existing cultural landscape resources when compared to Alternative 1 through the further extension of the open space area. The alternative

would also continue to re-introduce existing landscape features as well as new uses that are necessary to meet both the need for protection and for public use. The proposed park improvements under the preferred alternative would enhance the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission and therefore result in a beneficial, local, long-term major impact on the Mission San José cultural landscape.

All modifications that would result from the implementation of the preferred alternative would be installed in accordance with NPS-28 and the Secretary's Standards. Comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered would precede actual physical work as defined by the Section 106 coordination process. If removal, replacement, or alteration occurs, the significance of the altered, removed, or destroyed cultural landscape feature would be acknowledged through appropriate mitigation

Cumulative Effects: Again, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be mostly the same as described under the previous alternatives. These actions have the potential to benefit the cultural landscape as the projects would rehabilitate, enhance, and protect the local cultural landscape. Impacts of the actions would contribute an overall beneficial local, long-term minor to moderate cumulative effect on the cultural landscape.

The implementation of the preferred alternative would enhance the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission and therefore result in a beneficial, local, long-term major impact on the cultural landscape. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the implementation of the preferred alternative would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, moderate cumulative effect on the cultural landscape.

Historic Structures and Districts

Affected Environment

Mission San José became both a State Historic Site and a National Historic Site in 1941. Mission San José is also one of the four missions included in the Mission Parkway National Register District which was created in 1975. As previously discussed, the Harris House, a component of the contemporary Mission San José landscape was listed on the NRHP in 2001 under Criteria B and C. Mission San José itself meets the listing requirements of the National Register of Historic Places as under Criteria A (association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history), B (association with the lives of persons significant in our past), C (possesses distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction) and D (has yielded and is likely to continue to yield information important in history and prehistory) (NPS 1995).

Criterion A- Broader Patterns of History

Mission San José is associated with the establishment and operations of the Spanish colonial missions, which have made an important contribution to the broad patterns of the history of San Antonio, Texas, the American Southwest, and the nation. It is associated with the cultures of both Spanish colonizers and Native Americans. Mission San José, which was established in 1721, and located along the west bank of the San Antonio River, was part of the Spanish colonial system for the establishment and management of a defensive and settlement frontier in the American Southwest and is significant in the military, religious, economic, and cultural history of the Texas frontier. The mission played a major role in the development of the American cattle industry, a significant phenomenon in westward expansion (NPS 1995).

As the re-created physical representation of mission life, Mission San José is significant as an early twentieth-century preservation project implemented with both private and public support. It

1 is significant locally, statewide, and nationally in the history of historic preservation, and
2 contributes to both a specific and a broad understanding of preservation philosophy and
3 practice in the pre-World War II era (NPS 1995).

4 The San José WPA project (or reconstruction project) is one of the most extensive public works
5 preservation projects in its region; the work on the San José granary was, according to the
6 Conservation Society, the first restoration project in the U.S. completed by relief labor. The
7 lessons learned through early preservation projects in the U.S., such as San José, have
8 prompted current preservation professionals to demand more rigorous research which has
9 resulted in decreased emphasis on restoration and reconstruction and increased reliance on
10 preservation and rehabilitation as appropriate treatments for historic properties. San José
11 represents aspects of pre-World War II historic preservation and makes significant contributions
12 to a broad understanding of the history of historic preservation in the U.S. (NPS 1995).

13 *Criterion B – Associations with Significant Persons*

14 San José is associated with its founder Father Antonio Margil de Jesús, a prominent Franciscan
15 missionary who died in 1726 and who was beatified and presented for sainthood by the Catholic
16 Church; it is also associated with the history of groups of Spanish colonizers and Native
17 Americans, as discussed under Criterion A (NPS 1995).

18 *Criterion C - Distinctive Characteristics of a Type and Period of Construction*

19 The partially reconstructed church at San José, the centerpiece of the mission landscape and
20 an outstanding example of Spanish colonial architecture in the U.S., is an extraordinary
21 example of Spanish baroque architecture for the frontier and attests to the significance of
22 Mission San José in the hierarchy of Texas missions. Much of the existing mission landscape,
23 however, does not include significant concentrations of colonial-era above-ground resources;
24 instead it more properly could be understood to represent aspects of its 1930s re-creation in the
25 Spanish colonial revival style. As a result, San José also has local, state, and national
26 significance as an outstanding WPA-era example of historic preservation and as an example of
27 Spanish colonial revival design. As a re-created Spanish colonial mission, San José was
28 designed to portray much of the feeling of a colonial mission but was not designed as an
29 accurate reconstruction of the colonial period. Much of the WPA-era work was based on
30 beautification goals, conjecture, and other prototypes from the same period instead of on the
31 same kinds of strict archeological and documentary evidence that would be expected for similar
32 projects today. As a result, it is more accurately considered a historic re-creation and not a
33 restoration/reconstruction. As a Spanish colonial landscape re-creation from the 1930s, the
34 mission landscape possesses substantial integrity and portrays the distinct spatial organization
35 of a Spanish colonial mission as understood and interpreted during the early twentieth-century
36 (NPS 1995).

37 *Criterion D – Contribute Information Important in History and Prehistory*

38 Mission San José has yielded and is likely to continue to yield vital information about the
39 Spanish colonial period. It appears that its substantial and largely undisturbed archeological
40 resources have the potential to provide information concerning the history and design of the San
41 Antonio missions. In particular, archeological investigations at San José could be expected to
42 reveal information concerning colonial settlement patterns, the organization of the mission
43 landscape, historic land use, and ranching and other agricultural practices. As a result of the
44 1930s re-creation and concurrent ground disturbance, it is less likely that archeological
45 investigations will be able to inform a thorough understanding of the 1794-1911 cultural
46 landscape of Mission San José (NPS 1995).

Impact Analysis

Impacts of No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to the existing conditions. The current landscape would remain in place, an alternative open space gathering area would not be created, and no new features would be added. No direct or indirect impacts to historic structures or the district would result.

Cumulative Effects: The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to affect historic structures or the district, are related primarily to development around the park and other park development initiatives not related to the proposed park improvements. In addition, cumulative effects will be influenced by the continual growth of the population of the City of San Antonio.

These actions would benefit the historic structures and district as the projects would mostly rehabilitate, enhance and protect the local historic structures and district. Impacts to these features would be regulated under Section 106 of the NHPA. Impacts of the actions are therefore anticipated to have an overall beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on historic structures and districts. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the no-action alternative would not contribute a noticeable incremental impact to the beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on historic structures and districts.

Impacts of Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Alternative 1 would not require the removal or replacement of any historic structures or contributing features within the historic district. The alternative would however modify contributing features by creating the open space gathering area, pedestrian trails and a maintenance/storage/restroom building. These elements would be introduced within the assumed APE of known historic structures and may affect the Harris House, Huisache bowl/Amphitheatre and Bergs Mill as described in the *Cultural Landscape* section.

Alternative 1 would allow for the removal of both visual and some physical barriers which would allow for landscape restoration and enhancing the historic district. The creation of the open space gathering area would also provide an opportunity to have more public events outside the interior compound of Mission San José. This option would therefore reduce user generated pressure on Mission San José historic structures. These project elements would therefore have a beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate impact on historic structures and the district.

All modifications that would result from the implementation of alternative 1 would be installed in accordance with NPS-28 and the Secretary's Standards. Comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered would precede actual physical work as defined by the Section 106 coordination process

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions would benefit the historic structures and districts as the projects would mostly rehabilitate, enhance and protect the local historic structures and districts. Impacts to these features would be regulated under Section 106 of the NHPA. Impacts of the actions are therefore anticipated to have an overall beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on historic structures and districts

The implementation of Alternative 1 would not require the removal or replacement of any historic structures or contributing features within the historic district. Features would however be modified resulting in a beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate impact on historic structures and the district. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future

actions, the implementation of Alternative 1 would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on historic structures and the district.

Impacts of Alternative 2 - Preferred Action Alternative

Potential impacts would be similar to those described under Alternative 1. Additional elements of this alternative include removing San José Drive, creating an adaptive use restroom, further extending the Harris House parking lot to create a bus turn-around and realigning the pedestrian trail along San Jose Drive.

The preferred alternative would not require the removal or replacement of any historic structures or contributing features within the historic district but the alternative would continue to further modify contributing elements within the historic district. These activities would continue to fall within the assumed APE of known historic structures. As the alternative would mostly enhance the setting of the historic structures and district, primarily through the creation of a larger area of open space and through the incorporation of adaptive use restrooms, the alternative would have an overall beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact on the historic structures and the district.

All modifications that would result from the implementation of the preferred alternative would be installed in accordance with NPS-28 and the Secretary's Standards. Comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered would precede actual physical work as defined by the Section 106 coordination process.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions would benefit the historic structures and districts as the projects would mostly rehabilitate, enhance and protect the local historic structures and districts. Impacts to these features would be regulated under Section 106 of the NHPA. Impacts of the actions are therefore anticipated to have an overall beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on historic structures and the district.

The implementation of the preferred alternative would further modify contributing historic district features through the creation of more undeveloped open space area resulting in a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact on the historic structures and district. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the implementation of the preferred alternative would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, moderate cumulative effect on historic structures and the district.

Archeological Resources

Affected Environment

Mission San José is one of the four missions included in the Mission Parkway Archeological National Register District. Mission San José became both a State Historic Site and a National Historic Site in 1941 (NPS 1995). NPS archeologists believe that extensive archeological sites exist within and around the compound possessing significant archeological resources related to both periods of significance (NPS 1995).

The site has been studied to some extent during excavations in 1917, 1932-37, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1974, and 1994. Known and anticipated resources include acequia lines; fence lines; circulation routes; building and structure foundations; lime kilns, mills and other industries associated with mission life; gardens; artifacts; refuse deposits; privies; and possibly burial sites (NPS 1995).

Impact Analysis

The 1995 Cultural Landscape Report worked to develop management strategies that would not only to address the park's above-ground landscape but also to protect significant archeological resources. As a result of this work, it was determined that a preservation approach to managing archeological resources is appropriate for the park.

The preservation approach for archeological resources recognizes the overriding importance of colonial-era information and suggests that landscape rehabilitations should not disturb the still-largely intact archeological record. This approach assumes that archeological investigations would only occur when there is a need to discover information. The results of such investigations would continue to inform landscape understanding and interpretation of the Spanish colonial missions. The preservation approach also recognizes that when archeological resources cannot be avoided in relation to planned work, documentation of existing archeological conditions, archeological excavations, and other mitigation measures would precede site work.

Impacts of No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to the existing conditions. The current modified cultural landscape would remain in place, an open space gathering area would not be created and visitor services would not be enhanced. The no-action alternative would not include ground penetrating activities would be no direct impact to archeological resources. Implementation of the no-action alternative would result in the preservation of archeological resources causing a beneficial, indirect, site-specific, long-term and negligible impact.

Cumulative Effects: The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to affect archeological resources are related primarily to development around the park and other park development initiatives not related to the proposed park improvements. In addition, cumulative effects will be influenced by the continual growth of the population of City of San Antonio.

These actions all have the potential to disturb archeological resources. However, it is anticipated that all of these actions would follow the correct reporting and mitigation protocols as required by the NHPA. Through this coordination process, adverse impacts resulting from disturbances could be mitigated through the benefits derived from the resultant additions to the archeological record. The overall cumulative effect of other past, present, and foreseeable future actions on archeological resources could be adverse or beneficial, local short- and/or long-term, and negligible to moderate.

When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the no-action alternative would provide a beneficial incremental impact to the overall adverse or beneficial, local, short- and/or long-term, and negligible to moderate cumulative effect as archeological resources would be preserved.

Impacts of Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Based on the long history of human occupation, the area surrounding Mission San José has a high potential to contain archeological resources. The primary elements of the alternative include combining the Huisache "bowl" and the Harris House "bowl", creating an outdoor education area at Harris House and constructing a maintenance/storage/restroom building. These actions would require excavation and re-grading in order to create the open space gathering area and new building site. Additional, minor, shallow excavations would also be required for the proposed pedestrian trail extensions and the reconfiguring of the Harris House

parking lot. Adverse, site-specific, short-term, and minor to moderate impacts could result from all of these actions.

Construction phase archeological monitoring would ensure that any archeological resources that are disturbed would be appropriately coordinated per the NHPA. As a result of these efforts, should archeological resources be discovered, beneficial, local, long-term, minor to moderate impacts could result from the potential contributions made to the archeological record of the Spanish colonial period.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions all have the potential to disturb archeological resources. Again, it is anticipated that all of these actions would follow the correct reporting and mitigation protocols as required by the NHPA. Through this coordination process, adverse impacts resulting from disturbances could be mitigated through benefits derived from the resultant additions to the archeological record. The overall cumulative effect of other past, present, and foreseeable future actions on archeological resources could be adverse or beneficial, local short- and/or long-term, and negligible to moderate.

The implementation of Alternative 1 could disturb archeological resources during construction activities but these disturbances could also contribute to the Spanish colonial archeological record. The alternative could therefore result in adverse or beneficial, site-specific or local, short- and/or long-term, and minor to moderate impacts on archeological resources. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the implementation of alternative 1 would contribute an incremental adverse or beneficial, local, short- and/or long-term, minor cumulative effect on archeological resources.

Impacts of Alternative 2 – Preferred Action Alternative

Potential impacts would be similar to those described under Alternative 1. Additional elements of this alternative include removing San José Drive, creating an adaptive use restroom, further extending the Harris House parking lot to create a bus turn-around and realigning the pedestrian trail along San Jose Drive.

These actions would enable a more comprehensive restoration of the cultural landscape and further promote visitor services but would also result in additional ground disturbance, increasing the potential that archeological resources could be encountered. This action therefore has a potential to result in adverse, site-specific, short-term minor to moderate impacts on archeological resources.

As with Alternative 1, construction phase archeological monitoring would ensure that any archeological resources that are disturbed would be appropriately coordinated per the NHPA. As a result, should archeological resources be discovered, beneficial, local, short- and/or long-term minor to moderate impacts could result from potential contributions made to archeological record of the Spanish colonial period.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions all have the potential to disturb archeological resources. As with the other alternatives, it is anticipated that these actions would follow the correct reporting and mitigation protocols as required by the NHPA. Through this coordination process, adverse impacts resulting from disturbances could be mitigated through benefits derived from the resultant additions to the archeological record. The overall cumulative effect of other past, present, and foreseeable future actions on archeological resources could be adverse or beneficial, local, short- and/or long-term, and negligible to moderate.

The implementation of the preferred alternative could disturb archeological resources during construction activities but these disturbances could also contribute to the Spanish colonial archeological record and could therefore result in adverse or beneficial, site-specific or local, short- and/or long-term, and minor to moderate impacts on archeological resources. When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the implementation of the preferred alternative would contribute an incremental adverse or beneficial, local, short- and/or long-term, minor to moderate cumulative effect on archeological resources.

Visitor Use and Experience

Affected Environment

The Mission San José grounds are open to the public free of charge. The San José Mission Church, Rectory and Parish Building are maintained by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. The church hosts mass on weekends and on holy days, which are open to the public.

The park is open year-round, the number of people visiting the park has steadily increased, averaging over 1 million visitors per year since 1993 (except for a three year construction period), with 1.4 million visitors received in 2014. According to research by park staff, almost 60 percent of park visitors are over 45 years of age, 85 percent of visitor groups have at least one member from out of town, 8 percent are international visitors, and 44 percent of visitors are from Texas (NPS 2011). The majority of these visitors park in the Mission San Jose parking lot, use nearby facilities, and spend their time in the mission compound and visitors center. Large events there stress these facilities and resources. High visitor use areas are not part of the project area.

At present, visitor use of the project area is very low. San Jose Drive is sometimes used to access Mission San Jose, although most visitors use the main entrance street. In addition, some public education programs are held in the Harris House.

Impact Analysis

The impact analysis was based on the knowledge and best professional judgment of planners and biologists, data from park records, and studies of similar actions and effects, when applicable. The methodology used for assessing impacts to visitor use and experience is based on how the proposed park improvements would affect the visitor, particularly with regards to the visitors' enjoyment of Mission San José's resources.

Impacts of No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to park infrastructure. The current modified cultural landscape would remain in place, an open space gathering area would not be created, and visitor services would not be enhanced. In addition, under the no-action alternative, continued reliance on inadequate parking and restroom facilities, and insufficient area available for public gatherings that occur near the project area would continue to result in traffic jams, user conflicts, and resource impacts. The area north of Mission San Jose would continue to not be used and no pressure would be taken off the heavy use of the compound. In the context of the anticipated increase in park visitors, adverse, long-term, minor impacts to visitor use and experience would result as use and pressure increases.

Cumulative Effects: The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to impact visitor use and experience are related primarily to development around the park and other park development initiatives not related to the proposed park improvements. In

addition, cumulative effects will be influenced by the continual growth of the population of City of San Antonio. These actions could have an adverse, local, short-term, minor effect on visitor use and experience because of the inconvenience of construction noise, dust, and possible access restrictions. Ultimately, however, these actions would have or have had a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate effect on visitor use and experience based on the improvements to the visual and natural environment, interpretive opportunities and entertainment opportunities that would have or have been created both within the park and the immediate surrounds.

Under this alternative, adverse, long-term, minor impacts to visitor use and experience would result. When considering other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the no-action alternative would result in an incremental adverse, local, long-term, negligible effect to the overall moderate beneficial cumulative effect on visitor use and experience.

Impacts of Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Alternative 1 would enhance visitor experience through cultural landscape restoration and by improving services north of the Mission San Jose compound. The primary element of the alternative includes combining the Huisache “bowl” and the Harris House “bowl” to create a fairly large open space gathering area. This connection would allow for the removal of both visual and physical landscape barriers, restoring the cultural landscape. The alternative would create an open landscape that could be utilized by park visitors for many activities including picnicking, bird-watching, social events and resting. The open space gathering area would serve an additional functional in that it could be used as an event area instead of utilizing the Mission San José’s interior compound. This would encourage visitors to experience other areas of the mission and also reduce pressure on the mission’s historic resources and facilities outside the project area. This action would have beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact on visitor use and experience.

The alternative would also enhance the Harris House outdoor education area. The center would play an important role as learning center, creating park visitor opportunities for interpretation, education and recreation. This action would have beneficial, local, long-term moderate impact on visitor use and experience.

The proposed trail network would provide additional opportunities for park visitors while exploring Mission San José and the surrounds. The trail network would allow the visitor explore the park on foot directly from the parking areas. Visitors would also benefit from pedestrian trail connections to various SARIP initiatives such as the San José Portal and the existing SAAN Graham Trail. While promoting connectivity and encouraging exercise, the pedestrian trails would, through the use of wayside exhibits, provide an important avenue to educate the park users regarding the cultural resources within the park and Mission San José. The extended trail network would therefore result in beneficial, local, long-term, moderate, impact on visitor use and experience.

The creation of restrooms and improved parking would increase park visitor access to support services which would have an overall beneficial, site-specific, long-term negligible impact on visitor use and experience.

Noise and dust from construction activities and the temporary presence of construction equipment, materials, and crews would adversely affect the visitor experience. In addition, access to portions of project areas currently used by visitors may be temporarily limited during construction. However all construction-related impacts would be short-term and cease following construction activities. All of the actions discussed above would have an adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor impact on visitor use and experience.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions could all have an adverse, local, short-term, minor effect on visitor use and experience because of the inconvenience of construction noise, dust, and possible access restrictions. Ultimately, however, these actions would have or have had a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate effect on visitor use and experience based on the improvements to the visual and natural environment, interpretive opportunities and entertainment opportunities that would be created both within the park and the immediate surrounds.

The implementation of Alternative 1 would ultimately have a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact on visitor use and experience. Additional adverse, site-specific, short-term, negligible impacts could result from construction activities. When considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the implementation of Alternative 1 would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, minor cumulative effect on visitor use and experience.

Impacts of Alternative 2 - Preferred Action Alternative

The preferred alternative would generally include all of the elements of Alternative 1 but would further enhance visitor use and experience through more extensive cultural landscape restoration. The alternative would create a larger visually pleasing, open landscape that would be further enhanced by the removal of San José Drive and the associated traffic. The space would function in the same manner as described under Alternative 1 but would provide additional benefits to visitor use and experience as a larger portion of the cultural landscape would be rehabilitated. These actions would have beneficial, local, long-term, moderate to major impact on visitor use and experience.

The closing of San José Drive would result in motorists traveling northwest on East Pyron Avenue towards Roosevelt Drive having to turn left on San José Drive for approximately 800 feet and then right on Napier Drive for approximately 500 feet in order to enter Roosevelt Drive. Currently motorists traveling northwest on East Pyron Avenue towards Roosevelt Drive turn right on San José Drive for approximately 1400 feet in order to enter Roosevelt Drive. It is anticipated that the closure would have a negligible impact on vehicular travel time and local access and would therefore result in adverse, local, long-term and negligible impact on visitor use and experience.

The extended and improved parking would increase park visitor access to Mission San José. The bus turn-around capabilities would also improve the level of service for large groups of visitors. The improved parking would have a beneficial, site-specific, long-term minor impact on visitor use and experience.

The proposed adaptive use restrooms would increase park visitor access to support services and would avoid adding a new structure to the landscape, this would have an overall beneficial, site, specific, long-term negligible impact on visitor use and experience.

Construction impacts would be similar to the impacts described under Alternative 1. It is anticipated that these impacts would be adverse, site-specific, short-term, and minor.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions could all have an adverse, local, short-term, minor effect on visitor use and experience because of the inconvenience of construction noise, dust and possible access restrictions. Ultimately, however, these actions would have or have had a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate impact on visitor use and experience based on the improvements to the visual and natural environment, interpretive

opportunities and entertainment opportunities that would be created both within the park and the immediate surrounds.

The implementation of the preferred alternative would have a beneficial, local, long-term, moderate to major impact on visitor use and experience. When considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the implementation of the preferred alternative would contribute an incremental beneficial, local, long-term, moderate cumulative effect on visitor use and experience.

Park Operations and Management

Affected Environment

The park currently employs approximately 45 people and utilizes 120 volunteers. Employees are currently involved in park management and administration, facility management, maintenance of historic structures and grounds, and interpretive operations including providing tours and conducting park related research. Annual park visitor numbers are approaching 2 million people per year and visitation is anticipated to continue to increase. It is increasingly difficult to manage over 900 acres of park lands, thousands of square feet of historic structures, and the needs of the visitors. At present, operations and management of the project area revolve around maintaining the Harris House and adjacent parking lot for use by park staff.

Impact Analysis

The impact analysis was based on the knowledge and best professional judgment of planners, park staff, data from park records, and studies of similar actions and effects, when applicable. The discussion of impacts on park operations and management focuses on the staff needed to ensure visitor and resident safety, and the ability of park staff to protect and preserve resources. Park staff knowledge was used to evaluate the impacts of each alternative, and the evaluation is based on the current description of park operations.

Impacts of No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no modifications would be made to park infrastructure and there would be no change in park operations. The current modified cultural landscape would remain in place, an open space gathering area would not be created, and visitor services would not be enhanced. Park visitor numbers are anticipated to continue to increase and put more pressure on park operations and management. In addition, under the no-action alternative, reliance on inadequate parking facilities, and insufficient area available for public gatherings would continue to result in traffic jams, user conflicts, and resource impacts adjacent to the project area in the compound. The park would continue to have to pull staff from other projects and duties in order to manage traffic, enforce appropriate visitor use, and repair damaged resources associated with gatherings in the compound. In addition, current park operations and management structures may not be sufficient to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitor traffic. Adverse, indirect, local, long-term, minor impacts to park operations and management would therefore result from the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Effects: The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to impact park operations and management are related primarily to development around the park and other park development initiatives not related to the proposed park improvements. These actions would likely result in the park experiencing increased traffic, visitation, and associated use of the parks resources. In addition, cumulative effects will be influenced by the continual growth of the population of City of San Antonio. These actions could

all have an overall adverse, local, short- and/or long-term, minor impact on park operations and management as previous park operations and management structures may not be sufficient to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitor traffic.

When considered with other past, present, and foreseeable future actions, the no-action alternative would contribute an adverse, indirect, long-term, negligible cumulative effect on park operations and management as the existing operations and management structure may not be sufficient to accommodate the anticipated increase in park visitors.

Impacts of Alternative 1 – Moderate Action

Under Alternative 1, impacts would be primarily associated with the operation and management of park elements introduced in support of cultural landscape rehabilitation and the enhancement of visitor services.

The rehabilitated cultural landscape, which could be used as an alternative open space gathering area, and the additional of the maintenance/storage/restroom building, would require increased ranger presence and enforcement. Additional costs for operation maintenance of these features may be incurred. Similarly, the development of additional pedestrian trails would promote local connectivity, but would likely increase human traffic in previously under-utilized or un-utilized areas of the park, requiring increased ranger presence and enforcement.

Overall, under Alternative 1, impacts on park management and operations would be adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term, and moderate.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions could all have an overall adverse, local, short- and/or long-term, minor impact on park operations and management as previous SAAN operations and management structures may not be sufficient to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitor traffic.

The implementation of Alternative 1 would result in adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term, and moderate impact on park operations and management. When considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, it is anticipated that the alternative could contribute an incremental adverse, site-specific, short-and/or long-term, minor cumulative effect.

Impacts of Alternative 2 - Preferred Action Alternative

Under the preferred alternative, impacts would continue to be primarily associated with the operation and management of park elements introduced for cultural landscape rehabilitation and the enhancement of visitor services. These elements are the same as discussed in Alternative 1, but would also include further restoring the cultural landscape through the removal of a portion of San Jose Drive, additional pedestrian trail development, and additional parking improvements.

The addition of more pedestrian trails would likely increase human traffic in previously underutilized or unutilized areas of the park. This area may require increased ranger presence and enforcement. Similarly, the rehabilitated cultural landscape and associated larger open space area and the adaptive use restrooms, would require increased ranger presence and enforcement. However, the more extensive modification to the parking lot adjacent to the Harris House and the closing of San Jose Drive would provide additional beneficial impacts by further reducing enforcement needs while making operations easier due to the traffic control.

Overall, under the preferred alternative, impacts on park operation and management would be adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term, and moderate.

1 *Cumulative Effects:* Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be the
2 same as described under the no-action alternative. These actions could all have an overall
3 adverse, local short- and/or long-term minor impact on park operations and management as
4 previous SAAN operations and management structures may not be sufficient to accommodate
5 the anticipated increase in visitor traffic.

6 The implementation of the preferred alternative would result in an adverse, site-specific, short-
7 and/or long-term, and moderate impact on park operations and management. When considered
8 with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, it is anticipated that the
9 alternative could contribute an incremental adverse, site-specific, short- and/or long-term, minor
10 cumulative effect.

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CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Internal Scoping

Scoping is a process to identify the resources that may be affected by a project proposal, and to explore possible alternative ways of achieving the proposal while minimizing adverse impacts. Internal scoping was conducted by the SAAN Interdisciplinary Compliance Team with consultation from the NPS Intermountain Region Planning & Environmental Quality Office. Interdisciplinary team members also met in March 2011 to discuss the scoping meeting comments, the purpose and need for the project, various alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and possible mitigation measures. The team also gathered background information and discussed public outreach for the project. Over the course of the project, team members have conducted individual site visits to view and evaluate the proposed project area. The results of these meetings were reflected in a scoping and alternatives refinement report on file with SAAN and are also documented in this EA.

External Scoping

External scoping was conducted to inform the public about the proposal to make changes to the landscape north of Mission San Jose along San Jose Drive and to generate input on the preparation of this EA. A public scoping meeting was held on January 11, 2011 to allow for public comment and input on preliminary project alternatives. A mailing list of individuals and groups likely to be interested in the project and a news release was used to inform the public about the meeting and the project. The mailing list has 309 names and includes federal, state, local agencies, Affiliated Native American Groups, and local landowners.

A total of 30 people attended the meeting, which included an open house and formal presentation in which the preliminary project alternatives were described followed by a question and answer session. Meeting participants were provided with comment sheets to complete and return to NPS. In addition, participants were told both in the presentation and on the project fact sheet how to comment online by using the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. The public comment period commenced on January 12, 2011 and was open until January 27, 2011.

During the external scoping period, approximately 22 pieces of correspondence were received from the public through postings on the PEPC website and letters. The majority of respondents were neutral about the construction of a new building, but suggested that physical, biological, or chemical extermination may help resolve the rodent infestation problem. This alternative was examined by the interdisciplinary team and ultimately dismissed as not meeting the other objectives of the project, particularly resolving structural deficiencies in the existing administration building (see *Impact Topics Dismissed from Further Analysis in Alternatives*). The remaining responses included some in favor of the project, some opposed to the project, and one request for more information about the size of the parking lot.

Scoping Comments

In total, 14 letters, emails, PEPC comments and verbal comments were received during the meeting and scoping period. Of the 14 comments received, five were from individuals representing Los Compadres, the official friends group of the park; three additional comments were from other interest groups; one comment was from the Texas Historical Commission; one comment from SARA; and four additional comments were from interested members of the public. One comment expressed support for no-action alternative, one comment was in favor of

a version of Alternative 1 - moderate action, two comments were in favor of Alternative 2 – maximum action, and one comment was not in favor of Alternative 2 – maximum action.

However, input received was directed more to project elements rather the alternatives. Therefore, the comments were further analyzed to identify the individual project elements that the comments addressed. Seven comments supported closing San Jose Drive; six comments were in favor of reconfiguring or relocating the parking lot; four commented favorably on additional trails and connections to adjacent sites; and two supported the cultural landscape rehabilitation. On the negative side, seven comments objected to making an area for and holding large public events; two were concerned with tree removal; and two more were concerned with the proposed parking improvements.

Most public concern was related to the proposed open space gathering area. Specific concerns included the how the large open space gathering area may promote the use of the venue for events that would not be complementary to the objectives of SAAN. Further concerns were also raised regarding the addition of the proposed maintenance/storage/restroom facility building within the Mission San José cultural landscape. As summarized at the beginning of the EA, this led to the creation of a new alternative and the rejection of the Maximum Action Alternative.

Agency Consultation

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act, a letter will be sent to the Austin Ecological Services Field Office for concurrence with our determination that there are no federally listed species that may be affected by this project. The park will also contact Texas Parks and Wildlife for confirmation that no state-listed species will be affected.

In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR 800.3), consultation with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) will be initiated by park staff concurrently with the public release of the draft EA. A request for concurrence on a finding of no adverse effect to historic properties will be made, despite the fact that only conceptual renderings are currently available for the project.

Native American Consultation

Over 30 Native American groups were sent scoping letters to inform them of the proposed park improvements and to generate input on the preparation of this EA. The only response received was from the San Antonio River Missions Descendants advocating the construction of a Native American Center. Native American groups will be sent letters informing them that the EA is out for review.

Environmental Assessment Review and List of Recipients

The EA will be released for public review on May 22, 2015. To inform the public of the availability of the EA, the National Park Service will publish and distribute a letter or press release to various state and federal agencies, tribes, local organizations, and members of the public on the SAAN mailing list, as well as place an ad in the local newspaper. Copies of the EA will be available for review at SAAN Headquarters and the Mission Library. Copies will be provided to interested individuals upon request. Copies of the document will also be available for review online at the NPS PEPC website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>).

The EA will be subject to a 30-day public comment period ending June 22, 2015. During this time, the public is encouraged to submit written comments online at the NPS PEPC website at

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>. If you are not able to submit comments electronically through this website, then you may also mail comments to: SAAN, Attention: Greg Mitchell, 2202 Roosevelt Avenue, San Antonio, Texas 78210-4919. Following the close of the comment period, all public comments will be reviewed and analyzed, prior to the release of a decision document. The NPS will issue responses to substantive comments received during the public comment period and will make appropriate changes to the EA, as needed.

List of Preparers

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